

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF E-GOVERNANCE IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The Evolution of information and technology in communication has provided means for better and faster communication, recoup of data and utilization of technology, information to it users usage of various section of the people and department of the governments, open the new way to enhance the transparency to reach out the needy thought E-governance is mostly the application of information and communication technology (ICT) to administer government services to citizens through internet. Basically in developing countries like India digital transformation is considered as high priority constraint, advancements in digital transformation will equip the power of ICT to make the government processes efficient, quicker, accountable, inexpensive, Transparent. In this paper, we discuss about effectiveness and efficiency of e-governance Andhra Pradesh, one of the state giving highest rate of importance to digitalization of government functions in general and schemes', programmes for public in particular.

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INTRODUCTION

E-governance is the use of information communication technologies to integrate and improve government processes which enhances the internal and external communication of the government. The aptitude of the public sector to use ICTs for encapsulating the government or public services and expanding to the public with quality information (knowledge) and impressive communication tools which support human development. Internet and cyber space has made the Indian government driven into electronic world with the budding of information technology service oriented spunk of the central and state government of India the E-governance has become buzzword.

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But in developing countries like India, where literacy level is very low and most of the people are living below poverty line, it is very much difficult for the government to provide its services to such citizens via means of internet. Even the e-Readiness Rank of India is very low. E-readiness is defined as the ability to use information and communication technologies to develop one's economy and welfare.

1.1 Definition of e-Governance

e-Governance is the application of information & communication technologies to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of informational & transactional exchanges with in Government, between Govt. & Govt. Agencies of National, State, Municipal & Local levels, citizen & businesses, and to empower citizens through access & use of information.

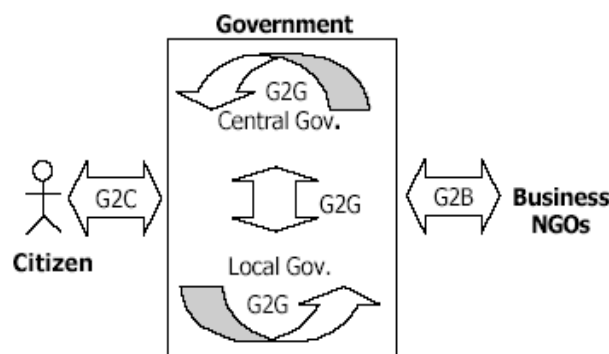
1.2 Objective of e-Governance in India

1. Providing single window clearance service to customers.
2. Furnishing the interfaces and applications to overcome cultural, language, and procedural barriers (Localization).
3. Assimilation of backend operations across all departments ensuring seamless flow of information to the user interfaces, call centers and front end customer service centre.
4. To provide secured online transaction and confidentiality of data.

1.3 e-Governance Model

The interactions in e-Governance, Government to Citizen (G2C), Government to Business (G2B) and Government to Government (G2G), which are presented schematically in Fig 1.

Figure – 1: *e-Governance Model*



AP's Initiation in e-Governance: The Government of Andhra Pradesh has always been at the forefront of leveraging information technology to provide services Citizens and businesses in an efficient and optimal manner through its various e-Governance initiatives and programs. Forming the core of a harmonious society is at the core of our planning and delivery of such services. Of late, the State has taken further pioneering steps by implementing projects such as CORE Dashboard, e-Cabinet, Mee Kosam, Mee Bhoomi, e-PoS and e-Pensions. AP currently occupies the first position among all the States in India, in the delivery of e-Services, as per the real-time statistics given by the “e-Taal portal of Government of India”. At this stage of evolution of the e-Governance in AP, it is felt

necessary for the State to make a pioneering effort by adopting a holistic approach, rather than several individual efforts.

1.4 Transformation of Andhra Pradesh to Digital

The digital program aims to transform India into digitally empowered society and knowledge economy which sets the long term direction. Similarly, states have their respective e-governance initiatives, collectively, there is no dearth of programmes and projects to implement this vision, The question that emerges is with so many things happening, what should bind them together in a holistic approach, such that there is convergence and coherence through its initiatives of CORE Dashboard, e-Cabinet, Mee Kosam, Mee Bhoomi, e-PoS and e-Pensions.

1.5 C.M. Core Dash Board

The Andhra Pradesh government is using big data and analytics to improve governance at all levels and in all departments. Every department data has been linked to CM Core Dashboard, where the data is real time and it can be monitored. Most of the data is updated automatically, instead of manual intervention and this assures the authenticity of the data presented on the CM Core Dashboard. The integration will help mainly for the welfare schemes to the people. All authentications so far were being done primarily based on the Aadhar number. It helped in huge savings and eliminating corruption and fake beneficiaries. Any citizen can visit the CORE dashboard portal from his computer or phone, to assess the efforts of the Government.

The CORE Dashboard is enabling the state government to monitor category-wise key performance indicators of various departments/schemes in real time. Public also can check key performance indicators of various departments, schemes, initiatives, programmes, With this, Government have been able to save crores of money under Public Distribution System, save energy and plug loopholes by eliminating middlemen in implementing welfare programmes.

For Example: How many pensions have been given in a particular ward. The data would show with the name of the beneficiary, phone number, address, at what time and date they have taken the pension can be seen.

Andhra Pradesh government successfully held Krishna Pushkaralu, with the same Real Time Data. From crowd management at ghats to ensuring safety of pilgrims and supply of food, everything is done using technology to make this a success.

1.6 e-Cabinet

Taking a step further in e-Governance, the Andhra Pradesh state Cabinet has now gone paperless.

Wielding iPads in their hands, Chief Minister of AP and his Council conducts meeting of what is being called “eCabinet”, a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country.

It was a regular meeting of the state Cabinet, but the uniqueness this time was that it is paperless, with the government switching over to the electronic format in conducting the proceedings.

The agenda and the minutes of the meeting were all electronically recorded while power-point presentation was made on important subjects for elaborate discussion, Andhra

Pradesh government, during previous stint as Chief Minister between 1995 and 2004, had been a pioneer in launching various eGovernance initiatives. The e-Cabinet, a new file-sharing system has been put in place using the File Cloud tool for ministers and top bureaucrats.

1.7 Mee-Kosam

Meekosam, a portal for people to report grievances, problems and give suggestions, was launched by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister.

1.7.1 About the Portal

The portal, www.meekosam.ap.gov.in will record grievance based on Aadhar number. The person who posted grievance or suggestion could also track the progress of his/her application. An acknowledgement will be received via SMS/e-mail once a grievance is registered. Meekosam also provides an option to classify complaints.

1.7.2 How it Works

The grievance will be registered, tracked and forwarded to the department concerned. It will be escalated to higher authorities if the grievance is not addressed within a certain time-frame. The status of the grievance could also be tracked through a toll-free number 1100/1800-425-4440. A Call Centre has been set up to register and provide information on status of grievance applications.

1.8 Mee-Bhomi

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has launched a new revenue website for the public use. The public portal www.meebhoomi.ap.gov.in is launched to get the land information in all the districts, mandals and villages of the state of AP. The people can get the details of their lands such as Adangal, Village Adangal, 1 B etc. The agriculture land details can be obtained through survey number, pattadar passbook number, Aadhaar number and also by searching through the name of the pattadar.

1.9 e-POS

Andhra Pradesh is the first State in the country to implement ePoS in 100% Fair price shops with the integration of FCI & MLS points (Supply Chain Management System) for lifting of Stock and ration portability. The system enables monitoring the Sales & Stock availability at every FPS. All PoS devices are linked with electronic weighing scales. As per the guidelines issued by Department of Food & Public Distribution regarding the Computerization of TPDS, the State of Andhra Pradesh has developed an end-to-end IT solution (TPDS), which has been successfully implemented with very encouraging results.

It was observed that many of the true beneficiaries of these subsidies suffer due to large-scale pilferage and diversion, retail level issues including duplicates and ghost beneficiaries. Monitoring of the scheme was difficult due to insufficient staff and its complicity. Online Authentication Services provided by UIDAI (fingerprints, iris and photo for face recognition) are used for the sale of PDS commodities to BPL beneficiaries in all Fair Price Shops (FPS). This has improved efficiency and transparency in the system and enabled on time ration delivery to eligible beneficiaries.

1.9.1 Services in e-POS Application

- Delivery of items to the FPS dealer by Authentication of Route Officer & FPSShop owner
- Best finger Detection
- Online Aadhaar Authentication of card holders
- Sale of PDS commodities
- Aadhar seeding
- Complaints registration

1.9.2 Benefits with e-POS Application

- Creating information visibility of supply chain will reduce diversion.
- Movement of commodities at market price all the way till the sale point.
- Generation of delivery order, truck challans, receipts enabling tracking of stock movement from FCI go downs to MLS points and from MLS points to FPSHops
- Obtaining up-to-date statements of stock lifting and stock at various stock points.

1.9.3 Impact and Achievement of e-POS in AP

1. Aadhar Seeding reached 98%, resulting in duplication and removal of bogus cards.
2. More than 5 Lakh citizens' requests through Meeseva addressed
3. Supply Chain Management with more than 40,000 release orders generated all over the State per month and also exact dispatch details of date, Truck no, truck date etc.
4. Savings in subsidy to the GoI and AP Govt.
5. Beneficiary receives SMS about arrival of stock at FPSShop
6. Mobile App giving allocation details and closing balances is available at <https://apps.mgov.gov.in/descp.do?appid=836¶m=app>
7. Monitoring of fraud
8. Delivery of ration to all the eligible beneficiaries

1.10 e-Pensions

As a part of initiation Ap government is providing pensions to the old, disabled and to the people who are in with below poverty line. Pensions are distributed in the grama panchayat through village secretary where the official person who distribute the pension is given an automated e-Machine with inbuilt finger print i.e., associated with Aadhar number. Where the concerned person has to use the finger print to avail the pension. With this system there will be utmost transparency in distribution.

1.11 Mee-Seva

The Government of AP as part of its vision to provide Good Governance to its citizens, initiated steps to harness the potential of IT to provide integrated services to the citizens by deploying the tools of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) so as to enhance Quality, Transparency, Convenience, Certainty and Accountability in providing such services through the concept of a 'One-StopShop' facility. One such initiative was eSeva centres project which was implemented in the year 2001 as a pilot on BOOT Model and implemented successfully.

Mee-Seva, easier, faster is an online, web based, transparent and secured citizen-centric service facility to provide convenient access to the citizens without any need for them to go to multiple Government offices for getting their work done. The certificates are issued with digital signatures of the authorized signatories in consonance with the Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 and Andhra Pradesh Information Technology Rules (Electronic Service Delivery) Rules 2011. Certificates will be printed on Secured Certificate Stationery.

1.12 Critical Issues For Rural AP in Development of e-Governance

e-Governance is a big challenge and is big opportunity to bring services to all citizens. The most significant characteristics of any successful e-Government application is quality and reliability and accessibility. The information collected by the government may be politically sensitive, instillation of appropriate security mechanisms may be an important technical consideration. At the same time, many other issues need to be resolved which include authentication and confidentiality.

1. **Technical Issues:** IT infrastructure is the backbone of e-Governance. Interoperability with existing software and hardware platforms is a key success factor. It is unlikely that available resources can support a full replacement of existing application. Hardware should be fully compatible with future technologies as well. Finally, some legal aspect, like security and privacy, must be considered, as personal data are processed and stored, and financial transitions must be executed. To cope with such requirements appropriate technical changes must be done. Multi-model application can make it more successful.
2. **Privacy:** Citizens' concern on privacy of their life and confidentiality of the personal data need to be technically supported. Privacy and confidentiality has to be highly valued in establishing and maintaining websites. An ideal Cyber policy and strict appliance of it is the backbone for citizen's support.
3. **Social Issue:** Acceptance and usability by a large variety of people make e-Governance successful. Since the social disparity is very high in India, so this issue needs a careful observation. This implies that interface must be usable by rich or poor, disabled or elderly people, understandable by low literacy or non-native language people, etc.
4. **Infra Structure:** Social, geographical and economical disparity issues have to be removed and proper infrastructure is required to establish e-Governance. The ICT facilities need to be developed and should be available to one and all citizenry. Internet connection through satellite, phone lines or through cable or Television should be accessible for all specially to the people in rural areas.
5. **Legal Issues:** Strong and effective rules related with IT has to be formulated and strongly implemented. This presupposes the adoption and use of security measures more particularly empowering and training judiciary and law enforcement manpower with the knowledge and use of cyber forensics and digital evidencing.

6. **Literacy:** In India where literacy rate is low, e-Governance is a real challenge. Lack of IT Literacy and awareness regarding benefits of e-Governance has to emphasize.
7. **Economical Issues:** Economical issues are mainly concerned with return of investment and safeguard of the previous ones. Cost of implementation, operational and evolutionary maintenance must be low enough to guarantee a good cost/benefit ratio.
8. **Political will Power:** e-Governance means less interaction with government servants, it will be helpful in reducing bribery issues. The strong objections of the government officers also need a careful and wise approach. This task may require an honest and strong will power of the politicians and leaders. e-Voting concept is not acceptable to politicians.

CONCLUSION

e-Governance is an evolutionary phenomenon, and requires a change in the mindset of one and all – citizen, executives or the government. With the support of the Internet, the government processes defined by specializations can be made efficient, effective, and citizen friendly. There are many challenging issues lying ahead. Security is the main concern for the citizen, and redefining rules and procedures, information transparency, legal issues, infrastructure, skill and awareness, access to right information, inter-departmental collaboration, tendency to resist the change in work culture, are the main concerns for the government to address.

Other than all these factors, the government needs to make significant investments in areas such as government process re-engineering, capacity building, training, assessment and awareness. The beneficial impact of ICT and of e-governance on the rural economy and quality of life is now widely recognized. An apex committee under the Cabinet Secretary is already in place for providing the strategic direction and management oversight. Need is to maintain a proper database of all the citizens and well developed infrastructure. Security issues need to be tackled very carefully supported by technical security. Most important is the strong political will power and the social acceptability of e-Governance not only in urban areas but rural areas as well.

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